

NORTH LANGLEY FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION Concussion Policy
Introduced: June 2018

A concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury that can have serious effects on a young, developing brain. While most children and teens with a concussion recover quickly and fully, some will have concussion symptoms that last for days, weeks, months, or even years.

We recognize that the improper management of concussions can result in potentially permanent or fatal outcomes.

As such, NORTH LANGLEY FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION (NLFA) has partnered with Complete Concussion Management™ Inc. (CCMI), a leading concussion research group, which involves a network of clinics across Canada with specialized training and certification in the diagnosis, management, and rehabilitation of concussions.

Policy

1. NLFA **strongly recommends** that all athletes **ages 8 and up** have a **full comprehensive baseline test through any Complete Concussion Management certified clinic** prior to participation in any practice or game. You must provide proof of completion by presenting a valid re-test date (found on the *Concussion Tracker* smartphone application) to your coach/trainer.
 - a. Baseline tests are valid for 1 full calendar year. If a baseline test is done the athlete must present proof of completion that will remain valid throughout the upcoming season in order to be accepted. If your baseline test is set to expire during the sporting season, you may be required to take a re-test to ensure validity throughout the season.
 - b. To find a clinic in your area please visit www.completeconcussions.com/find-a-clinic. Please contact your local clinic and indicate that you would like to register the athlete for baseline testing.
2. **In the event of a head injury and/or suspected concussion NLFA strongly recommends that a player attends a CCMI recognized clinic to be assessed and follow the directions of the practitioner.**
3. All Coaches and Trainers involved in NORTH LANGLEY FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION must complete the CCMI Concussion *Sideline Course* and download the accompanying CCMI *Concussion Tracker* Smartphone Application. This can be completed at www.completeconcussions.com.
4. If a concussion is suspected, **whether or not it occurred as a part of NORTH LANGLEY FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION activities**, the athlete is to be removed immediately from all practices and/or games and not permitted to return until cleared either by their family doctor, or - as NLFA strongly recommends - through the CCMI recognized clinic and the *Concussion Tracker* Smartphone Application.
 - a. Indication of injury is demarcated by a red icon beside the player's name on the *Concussion Tracker* coach/trainer smartphone app. A yellow icon beside a player's name indicates that they are cleared to participate in NON-CONTACT practice. A green icon beside a player's name indicates that they are either uninjured and/or cleared for full participation.

- b. All suspected concussions must be reported through the Concussion Tracker Smartphone Application by a coach/trainer. If requested by your governing body, you may also be required to report the suspected concussion to **British Columbia Provincial Football Association** via injury reporting form to **the director of risk and safety of British Columbia Provincial Football Association and/or the Valley Community Football League/Commission**.
- c. If a concussion is suspected, the player is strongly recommended to make an appointment at the nearest CCMI clinic as soon as possible to receive a proper diagnosis and help speed the *Return-to-Play* process. If the Trainer deems the injury to be an emergency medical situation the player will be advised to attend the nearest emergency department or Emergency Medical Services will be summoned as per First Aid procedures.

5. **NORTH LANGLEY FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION** Return-to-Play Process:

We recommend that each stage in this process should be completed in conjunction with a CCMI certified practitioner prior to ANY athlete returning to practice or competition. Each stage must be separated by at least 24 hours and the athlete must be completely symptom-free at each stage prior to progressing to the next stage. If symptoms are experienced at any stage, the athlete is to drop back to the previous stage for a period of 24 hours and be symptom-free at that stage prior to attempting the next stage again. Any stage below marked with ** indicates that this stage should be completed under the direction of a CCMI certified practitioner. Please book these appointments in advance to ensure that you are seen at the appropriate times. Each stage of recovery for injured athletes, as selected by the treating clinician, can be viewed through the *Concussion Tracker* application to ensure that everyone is on the same page.

Athletes - (if injured only) - Select the red icon titled “Recovery Tips” to view your recovery stage and permissions.

Coaches/Trainers - Select Profile → Team → the athlete in question, to view the recovery stage and permissions of any injured athlete on your team

Stage 1 - Relative Rest **

Once the athlete has received a diagnosis of concussion from a certified CCMI practitioner, the first step is *Relative* rest. During this stage it is extremely important that the athlete refrain from any activity that could burn energy (a concussion is an energy deficit within the brain). This means minimizing exercise, school, homework, studying, video games, cell phones, TV. Once the athlete has had at least 24 hours of *SYMPTOM-FREE* rest, they can progress on to stage 2. If the athlete has rested for 3 or more days and is still experiencing symptoms, please book a follow-up appointment with your CCMI practitioner to discuss a potential treatment strategy which could speed your recovery. If you are ready to move on to the next stage, please submit a progress report to your treating clinician through the *Concussion Tracker* smartphone application by selecting the recovery tips icon and scrolling to the bottom of the page.

Stage 2 - Light ‘Cognitive’ Activity

“Cognitive” means mental. After the athlete is completely symptom free for a period of 24-hours with no mental stimulation, try incorporating 30-45 minutes (MAX) of light reading, homework, TV viewing etc. If the athlete has no symptoms with the addition of light cognitive activity, they can be permitted to move on to stage 3 the following

day. If the athlete starts to feel symptoms with the addition of light cognitive activity, they are to drop back to stage 1 for another 24 hour rest period (Stage 1) before attempting stage 2 again. Please ensure that you update your treating clinician by submitting a progress report (located at the bottom of the “Recovery Tips” window in the *Concussion Tracker* app).

Stage 3 - Half-Day of School with Modifications

The athlete is now permitted to attend a half-day of school with modifications. Your CCMI practitioner will provide you with a letter specifically outlining what you can and cannot do. Typical modifications include but are not limited to: No tests, No gym, No homework, No music class, Frequent breaks etc. If the athlete experiences a return of symptoms they are to drop back to stage 2 for 24-hours (and be symptom free) prior to attempting stage 3 again. If the athlete has no return of symptoms with a half-day of school, they are permitted to advance to stage 4 the following day. Please ensure that you update your treating clinician by submitting a progress report (located at the bottom of the “Recovery Tips” window in the *Concussion Tracker* app).

Stage 4 - Full Day of School with Modifications

The athlete is now permitted to attend a full day of school. Your CCMI practitioner will once again provide modifications as to what you are, and are not, permitted to do. Please ensure that you update your treating clinician by submitting a progress report (located at the bottom of the “Recovery Tips” window in the *Concussion Tracker* app).

Stage 5 - Light Physical Activity **

If the athlete had no return of symptoms at stage 4, you are to book a follow-up appointment with your CCMI practitioner to complete stage 5. This stage incorporates the addition of light physical exertion to see how your brain responds to an increased demand for blood flow. You will need to dress in athletic attire and be required to complete 20-30 minutes of clinician supervised physical activity while your heart rate and blood flow are monitored.

Stage 6 - Non-Contact Practice - Phase I (Low Intensity)

Upon successful completion of stage 5, the athlete will be permitted to return to sport specific activity with the team in a NON-CONTACT format. The athlete will be asked to complete various simple “sport-specific” drills that do not involve contact or the chance of contact. These drills will be individually based and will involve fairly low physical stress as well as low heart rates.

A list of suggested drills for every sport can be found in the coach/trainer smartphone app by selecting Profile → Team → the athlete in question → select a sport from the dropdown menus to view drills.

Any increase in symptoms the athlete is to be removed from practice and attempt again at the next practice. Coaches or trainers should submit a progress report through the *Concussion Tracker* application at the end of every practice to notify the treating clinician on performance and/or the onset of any symptoms experienced (Profile → Team → athlete in question → scroll to bottom)

Stage 7 - Non-Contact Practice - Phase II (Higher Intensity)

This stage will once again be administered by your coach and/or trainer. The athlete is now permitted to take part in ‘dryland’ training and weight training. Sport-specific drills can now be conducted at higher intensity and be more *team-based* (3-man

weave, breakouts, etc.). At this stage, athletes are still NOT permitted to participate in any drills that involve contact or that have the chance for potential contact.

As in stage 6, lists of suggested drills for every sport can be found in the coach/trainer smartphone app by selecting Profile → Team → the athlete in question → select a sport from the dropdown menus to view drills.

Any increase in symptoms the athlete is to be removed from practice and attempt again at the next practice. Coaches or trainers should submit a progress report through the *Concussion Tracker* application at the end of every practice to notify the treating clinician on performance and/or the onset of any symptoms experienced (Profile → Team → athlete in question → scroll to bottom)

Stage 8 - Blackhawks Protocol and Re-Testing of Baseline **

This stage must be conducted by a certified CCMI practitioner. The Blackhawks protocol is an intensive physical exertion protocol that challenges the athlete's cardiovascular system as well as their balance (vestibular system) and assesses their readiness to return to full athletic competition. Upon successful completion of the Blackhawks program, the athlete will immediately undergo full re-testing of all baseline-testing parameters to assess every area of neurological functioning to determine if the athlete has reached full brain recovery. Many athletes reach this stage believing that they are fully recovered because they are no longer experiencing symptoms. Keep in mind that symptoms (how you feel) does not coincide with brain recovery. If you do not successfully complete this stage, do not be discouraged; it simply means that your brain has not fully recovered.

This stage takes approximately 1.5 hours. Please dress in athletic attire, bring water, and be prepared to exercise.

Upon successful completion of this stage, the athlete will be cleared for full contact. They will once again appear in green on team lists within the *Concussion Tracker* app.

Stage 9 - Full Practice

Upon successful completion of stage 8, it is strongly encouraged that you participate in at least 1 practice at full intensity, including contact drills, prior to participating in a game. The intensity of practice is generally less than the intensity of game play and therefore it is encouraged that the athlete complete this step so that they are more prepared for high-intensity game play.

Stage 10 - Full Game-Play

NORTH LANGLEY FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION has formed a collaborative partnership with Complete Concussion Management Inc. because they are the leaders in concussion management for amateur sports associations across Canada. All protocols and stages are based on the most current scientific research and this policy has been enacted to help keep your kids safe; reducing the risk of concussion as well as the potentially permanent or fatal outcomes that may arise from improper management of these injuries. Thank you for your cooperation, as well as your support in helping to make this sport safer for your children.